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Hal Verb
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3-13-00

Harold Weisberg
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Dear Hal:

First, with respect to your latest letter in which you wanted to know if I transcribed the Lifton harangue on my answering machine wherein he attacked me for ridiculing the Livingstone nonsense on the Z-film = no, I didn't tape it - I just took notes of what he said. I'm sure Lifton will say that what he told me is very much what I wrote you. Lifton is completely in another world and probably his planetary system consists of several moons rotating about him. Who, today, takes him seriously - if they ever did. Same for Livingstone.

If you ever can get a chance & can send me your manuscript on "Pig History" about Kurtz, I'd appreciate it. (I'll pay for all costs if you send it - but, please, don't go out of your way to do this, I do appreciate how difficult it is for you to get around, believe me!).

Now - to tell you about an all day conference on the assassination which Gary Aguilar put on for Saturday -

(see over) →

day, March 11th from 9:30 AM to 7:30 PM (yes — that long!!). It was held in a hospital room directly across the street from Gary's office.

There was a total of 20 people who showed up. I walked in about one-half hour late & was stunned to see so many in a single room. Apparently Gary had done a lot of work preparing for this as there was an agenda list of many speakers whose names included John Newman, Peter Dale Scott, Jim Di Eugenio, Doug Horne, David Mantik, Aguilar, Art Snyder, Josiah Thompson, Paul Hoch, Barbara Junkkarinen, Gene Case, Roger Peterson, Lisa Pease & Rex Bradford.

I was not one of the speakers (for whatever reasons Gary didn't select me, I can't say but others who were invited who didn't speak probably may wonder why they didn't speak. Let me tell you who the non-speakers were (besides myself) = Doug DeSalles, Bill Turner, Twyman, and a J.V. Thomas (rather new to the case). Incidentally, Thomas asked me for your name, address & phone # which I gave him so, apparently, he knows of your work. He said he would call you. Thomas is a "political consultant" & seems to know some very powerful figures (in both parties) & may be of help in contacting people who otherwise cannot be easily reached by a single phone call or letter. You'll have to judge for yourself how can be of help.

The agenda at this Saturday meeting never did meet the time schedule Aguilar laid out. Gary just let speakers ramble on about their pet projects

& never stopped anyone who had gone way over their time limit. The result of Gary's not interfering with the speakers was that several speakers on Gary's own agenda never spoke. These included: Josiah Thompson, Paul Hoch, Gene Case, Roger Peterson & Barbara Junkkarinen.

Some other observations: at one point when Aguilar was showing one of the autopsy photos, Hoch had asked a question of Gary & Gary answered & then Gary said well, Paul - this is the Warren Commission's version & since you appear to be on their side what is your opinion of this?" Hoch shot back & said: "I don't have to discuss that!" Then Gary said, "OK I see, it is OK for you to ask me a question but when I ask you a question, there's no discussion!!"

Some people in the audience groaned when they heard Paul say he didn't have to discuss what his thoughts were. This was the second time I've seen Paul bristle when he was being asked to comment. You may recall that I wrote you almost two years ago about another Aguilar-led conference & I pointedly asked Paul a question, "Well, if you now believe in no conspiracy, can you, at least, tell me what your thinking is about the "single bullet" version?" & Paul refused to answer saying "I don't have to tell you my reasons!"

It is still a real puzzle as to why Paul is behaving the way he is & I haven't figured it out! Real mysterious.

Ironically enough, after the conference was

over & we went to a nearby restaurant Paul & Gary sat next to each other & were very amiable in their discussion. I sat across from them & they showed no bitterness.

By the way my good friend Doug DeSalles was at the dinner table. You may be interested in knowing that Doug has given up his medical practice & is now learning to be a pilot. He told me he's gotten his pilot's license. That is quite a switch in occupations. This may explain why he has more time to do writing.

Now I want to tell you a bit about myself & what has come up in the recent period. You may recall that a few years back I told you my doctor (who is a Cardiologist) had diagnosed me as having a damaged heart valve. At that time he said we'll have to closely monitor your case & see how it goes along but, he said, there may come a time for valve replacement. He put me on a pill prescription "diet" regime.

So a recent examination by my doctor and after I went through an "echo test" he informs me that in his opinion he now believes I should get this valve replacement done fairly soon. The longer I delay the dangerous it might become. He did tell me that there was no immediate danger & another doctor studied my case & gave a second opinion that - yes, indeed, - I should go through the operation but it is not an immediate threatening condition.

I should note that the "second opinion" doctor's name was given to me by the original doctor. They both work in the same office but they are not associates. This was made clear to me by my original doctor who wanted to (most likely) show me that his opinion wasn't influencing the second doctor's opinion.

My original doctor also suggested that I have an angiogram taken. He said this because if I were to get a third opinion the doctor then drawing a conclusion would be better informed about my over-all condition. What my original doctor said was that regardless of what kind of valve would be replaced (mechanical or a pig's heart) there might be a "complication" in the procedure. When I asked him what kind of "complication" he replied. It could be that along with the valve replacement operation there might be needed "by-pass" procedure or the valve might have to be "reconstructed". Naturally he said he could not judge that as things still stand now.

There was one other consideration & it is an important one. He said that before undergoing all this I'd have to make absolutely certain that my teeth have no defects at all. The problem with me is that I have very bad teeth (I've unfortunately let them rot badly — I'm no lover of dentists). I told my doctor I'll need to replace my teeth & that'll, naturally, have to be done first.

My doctor said to think all this over (& it was obviously dramatic news when I

was told this — I didn't sleep well for days after, but I have to call him & let him know where I'm going with all this.

I should finally note that my doctor did say that in these cases & with my age (68) the failure rate is only 4% but he did add that this percentage is based only on valve replacement & no further complications. Further complications add a few percentage points to the rate.

He did tell me, however, that he has no doubt I'll pull through all this & be back walking again (& better). He said he based this on my attitude & from his knowledge of handling other patients & his twenty years of experience.

Well, that's how it stands as of the moment. I'll keep you informed in the future.

Best,

Hal